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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Central Intelligence Bulletin

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12 November 1970

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Approved For Release 2003/03/28 : CIA-RDP79T00975A017500100001-6

Approved For Release 2003/03/28 : CIA-RDP79T00975A017500100001-6

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No. 0271/70
12 November 1970

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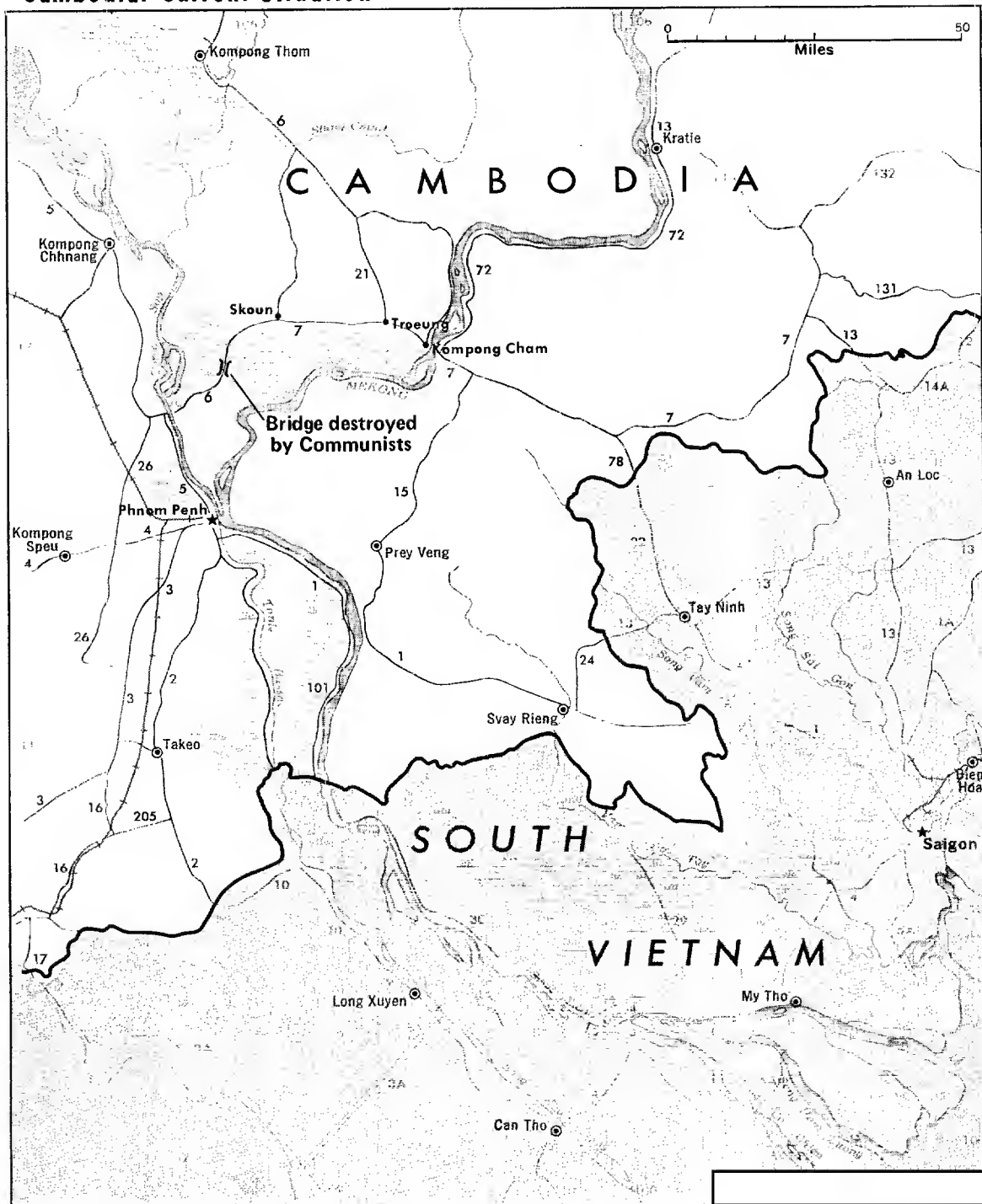
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CAMBODIA: Fighting has now ebbed in the Skoun - Kompong Cham area, but there are signs that the Communists are moving in new reinforcements west of the Mekong.

Although enemy harassments of Cambodian positions north of Skoun and in Kompong Cham city have been reported, no major enemy attacks have developed in the past 48 hours. According to press reports, Cambodian units have pushed eastward along Route 7 into the crossroads town of Troeung, which has been evacuated by the Communists. The entire length of Route 7 between Skoun and Kompong Cham city is apparently not yet secured, however, and major North Vietnamese elements remain positioned in the vicinity of the road.

The decline in Communist activity has caused Cambodian commanders to scrub plans to divert six battalions from the Route 6 "Chenla" task force to clear Route 7. They now hope to do the job with troops in Skoun and those already situated along the road. Efforts to bring up reinforcements overland from Phnom Penh presumably will have to be postponed until a temporary bridge is substituted for the large span destroyed by the Communists south of Skoun two days ago.

The severity of the recent round of Communist attacks is difficult to measure, but Cambodian units once again gave a good account of themselves. Although defenders in the Troeung area folded fairly quickly, in Skoun and Kompong Cham they turned back Communist attacks after some sharp fighting. Communist casualties appear to have been relatively high, although it is not possible to verify the claims of Cambodian commanders that over 100 of the enemy were killed and many more wounded. [REDACTED]

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EAST GERMANY - BERLIN: The East Germans have mounted a major propaganda campaign in reaction to the shooting of a Soviet war memorial guard in West Berlin last Saturday.

Party chief Walter Ulbricht set the tone in a television appearance the following day declaring that the shooting, by a young West Berlin right-winger, reveals the dangerous activities of fascist organizations in West Berlin. East German media have stressed and embellished this line. The Soviet Embassy in East Berlin has been the recipient of numerous East German delegations and communications offering condolences. Protest rallies have been staged in factories and schools outside the city.

Officially the Soviets have taken a low-key attitude toward the incident, presumably to avoid provoking a reaction in West Germany. They have registered a protest with the British but have limited their public statements to the factual reporting of West Berlin Mayor Schuetz's condemnation of the incident and his apology. In contrast, East German media distorted Schuetz's statement and have castigated West Berlin authorities for alleged slowness in their investigation. The East Germans have also charged that the arrest of only one suspect indicates that the West Berlin Senat intends to pin the crime on an individual so that it will not have to take action against fascist organizations.

The activities of right-wing political groups in West Berlin are one of the issues raised by Moscow in the four-power talks on Berlin. It is an issue the East Germans can exploit without fear of Soviet contradiction prior to the next working level meeting on Friday. The East Germans are also using the propaganda campaign to stress, prior to opening of their own exploratory talks with Bonn, the contention that West Berlin must be considered a political entity separate from West Germany. [REDACTED]

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BELGIUM: Informed observers are suggesting that the Social Christian - Socialist government may not last much longer.

The central issue in the mid-October communal elections campaign was the government's reform program to ease tensions between the Flemish and Walloon communities. The militant Flemish and Walloon parties, which favor an end to the unitary state, were able again to increase their strength. The Social Christians held their own in Flanders but did poorly elsewhere; the Socialists did well in all areas, but many local Socialist party slates ran against the government's program. Although the Liberal Party is in opposition, its poor showing may have been the worst news of all for the government; its support is necessary for constitutional revision, and now it is in considerable disarray.

In view of the election results, it is not surprising that Premier Eyskens has found little support for pressing forward with the reform program. Because Eyskens last year staked his government's tenure and his own personal prestige on this program, many are predicting that he will resign before the year's end. It is also argued that the Socialists might like early national elections to consolidate the strength they have just garnered at the communal level.

Eyskens, nevertheless, has proven himself a skillful politician who, on previous occasions, has defied the political odds-makers. Last year, for example, he managed to bring his reform program much closer to passage than most had expected. He no doubt has options to explore. Eyskens could look to Brussels, for example, where the three establishment parties--the Social Christians, Socialists, and Liberals--banded together to form the local government; only one had run in support of the government's program, but all three had been outpolled by the local Francophone party.

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NOTES

UN-CHINA: Debate on the Chinese representation issue begins today in the General Assembly. There is a chance that the "Albanian" resolution to seat Peking and expel Taiwan will attain a plurality for the first time, but the precise outcome will depend on the votes of several countries whose final position may not yet have been decided. Support for Peking in any case will surely fall well below the two-thirds majority required under the Important Question resolution that will certainly be adopted again, although by a narrower margin than heretofore.

[REDACTED]

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ZAMBIA: The government has announced that it will acquire a 51-percent interest in the country's private banks and a 100-percent interest in building-and-loan societies, and that it will become the country's sole insurance agent. These nationalizations, which leave very little in the economy outside government control, are the latest in a series dating back to April 1968 when 26 companies were absorbed by the government. Last January the government made its most significant nationalization move by taking over a 51-percent interest in Zambia's vital copper industry. Moreover, as of 1 January 1972, no more retail trading licenses will be issued to foreigners.

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ARGENTINA: The General Confederation of Labor (CGT) has called a 36-hour general strike for today and Friday to reinforce its demands for higher minimum wages, immediate restoration of collective bargaining, and a voice in government policy formulation. The CGT backed two very effective general strikes last month, which may have contributed to the government's decision to reorganize its economic team. The new economics minister is pushing a program emphasizing social progress--even at the expense of monetary stability. He has announced some increase in the minimum wage and has promised collective bargaining by 1 April. These concessions are unlikely to satisfy CGT hard-liners, however, and security forces will be on the alert to contain any extremist attempts to exploit the strike. [REDACTED]

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ECUADOR: The kidnaping and later release of the air force commander are likely to widen the gulf between the Velasco administration and its political opponents, but they have not affected the government's military support. The government claims that the incident was engineered by former air force colonel Andres Cordova, a political enemy of the President who was purged from the military this year. Cordova's father, who heads the Radical Liberal Party and finished a close second to Velasco in the 1968 elections, is a noted criminal lawyer and will apparently fight the charges.

The kidnaping, along with the indiscriminate arrests that followed, will harden opponents' attitudes toward President Velasco. The abduction also served as a convenient pretext for the removal of the unsavory air force general for "reasons of health." His dismissal, if softened by diplomatic exile, will probably disturb few beyond his personal band of followers. [REDACTED]

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